A letter written

by the King of Nauarr, to *the three eſtates of* Fraunce:

Containing a moſt liuely deſcription of the diſcommodities and dangers of ciuill warre: and a very forcible perſwaſion to obedience, vnitie, and peace.

Together with a breefe declaration vpon the matters happened in *Fraunce* ſithence the 23. day of December. 1588.

Tranſlated out of French, by G. R.

AT LONDON

Printed by Thomas Purfoote, and are to be ſould at his ſhop ouer againſt S. Sepulchres Church without Newgate.

1589.

Ames, p. 334. Wh. p. 1001.

¶ A Letter written by the King of Nauarr to the three eſtats of Fraunce, containining a declaration of the ſaid King, vpon the matters happened in Fraunce ſithence the 23. daie of December 1588.

MY Lords and Mayſters, vvhen I call to mind that this foure yeares ſpace I haue bene the argument of the tragœdies of Fraunce, the common talke of my neighbouers, the ſubiect of ciuile armes, & by reaſon of theſe armes, of a world of miſeries: when I doe conſider that vpon a caſualtie to come, ſeperated as farre from the thoughts of Frenchmen as from my deſire, ſome men haue cauſed this realme to feele the preſence of infinite calamities, and that vpon the vaine & imaginarye feare of my ſucceſſion to this eſtate, they haue framed and in a maner erected an vſurpation: when with theſe eyes, which God hath principally geuen me to haue them alwayes open for the good of my countrie, beholding theſe continuall miſchiefs, I am conſtrained to ſee my countrie on fire, hir principall pillers burnt, hir beſt townes conſumed to aſhes, and that in ſteed of bringing water to quench theſe flames, to endeuour to ſaue that which yet remayneth ſounde (as I deſire, and willingly would haue done, in ſuch ſort that it might neuer burſt foorth againe) they do inforce mee in ſpight of my teeth, to caſt my ſelfe into the fire, and to make my de-

fence almoſt as odious as the violences which thoſe men vſe that perſecute mee: either I ſhould bee of all ſenceleſſe men the moſt voyde offence that euer was, or elſe it muſt needs bee, that vpon conſideration of the publike eſtate my ſoule bee tormented a thouſand times a daye with vexations and greefes, ſuch as no hell is able to affourd the like: eſpecially ſeeing I knowe that of all theſe misfortunes the malitious make me the authour, the ignorant the cauſe, and I my ſelfe (though I may bee very well forborne and pardoned in this caſe) do terme my ſelfe the occaſion. But as touching my particular eſtate, ſince it is my hap to be born in ſuch an age) when I lay before mee that which God hath done for mee in the beginning, middle, and continuance of theſe laſt troubles: howe many witneſſes he hath affourded mee of the iuſtice of my cauſe and my innocencie, not onely in Fraunce, but alſo in foreigne nations, not within the heartes of my friendes, but euen within the mouthes of thoſe whiche are none of my wel-willers: not within the opinion of vulgare conceits, but (God knoweth) within the ſoule and conſcience of my king: how by many effects hee hath cauſed it to appeare that he hath care of me, hauing myraculouſly defended, ſaued, & aſſured me from the forces againſt which there was no likelihood that I ſhould be able to make head: ſurely if I were of an other ſpirit than I am, I ſhould haue as much reaſon to pleaſe my ſelfe with the particular of my cõdition, as the remẽbraunce of the publike is greeuous vnto me. My Lords & maiſters, I cãnot do it, I wil neuer account baſely of my countrie, *I* will alwaies prefer the welfare thereof before mine owne: and they ſhall alwayes ſee that my miſhaps, my hinderances, & mine afflictions, ſhall runne before thoſe of my countrie. But neuertheleſſe I cannot conceale the contentment which *I* receaue, in that by all the occaſions which haue beene offered, *I* haue cauſed it to bee made manifeſt both by my actions, by my wordes, and by my writings, how it greeues mee at the very heart to ſee the miſeries wherein wee goe aboute to imbarque our ſelues: were it not that

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the examples paſſed did make vs ſomewhat more circumſpect for that which is to come. This you know to be true,& I beleeue there is no man at this preſent ſo paſsionate,which can denie me this witneſſe, which comforts mee not a little, beeing fully perſwaded, that beſide the vprightneſſe of my cauſe,nothing hath more aſſwaged the wrath of GOD towards mee,nothing hath mooued him more to defend mee, than this.But if it had pleaſed God to haue put into the harts of the King my ſouereign,and of you my Lords, that I might haue beene called to the aſſemblie, which ſome of your deputies held at *Bloyes* (as truely me ſeemeth I ought to haue beene) and that I had beene permitted freelye to haue propounded that which I take to be for the profit of this eſtate,I had cauſed it plainely to appeare, how I had not the deſire onely in my heart,the words in my mouth, but the effects & deedes readie in my handes,how I ſeeke no ſtarting holes to ſhroud my ſelfe in, nor propoſitions coloured with faire wordes, to the which by no meanes I meane to tie my ſelfe. And to the contrary, that I haue a good reſolution, and earneſt affection to the greatneſſe of the King and realme, as much as may bee, yea though it were with the loſſe of mine owne,and that when all the reſt ſhall be diſpoſed, hee ſhall not need to treat nor to capitulate with me: my conſcience aſſuring mee that nothing hath euer made mee to ſtande aloofe,but the conſideration of him, and regarde of mine honour. But ſeeing this is not doone which might verye well haue beene performed (and that Fraunce may count it for one of hir ouerſights, that ſhee hath had no better phyſitions than thoſe which delighte to continue hir ſickneſſe) I meane to giue you to vnderſtande by this diſcourſe, both that which I thinke to bee my dutie, as alſo that which I eſteeme neceſſary for the ſeruice of God, and the King my liege, and for the good of this realme: to the ende that all the ſubiects of this crowne may bee inſtructed therein, and that all meh may know for my diſcharge my intent and innocencie.

First I will represent vnto you mine estate : not for to glorifie my selfe (for let mee make neuer so great reckoning of my selfe, God may abase me) nor for to tell you that *I* speake a cock-horsse and at much ease (the same God knoweth, wherein resteth my contentment, wherein I trust, and whereupon I principally rely) but to the ende I may manifest vnto you two thinges: the one. The condition of these miserable warres, the aduauntages that mine enemies haue had against mee, how mightely they haue assailed mee, how greatly they haue bene furthered thereby: that at least you may be cõpelled to iudge without passiõ, that God hath not preserued me against such huge forces without a miracle: and that this miracle should not haue bene, if innocencie and good right of iustice had not bene on my side. The other, that I may make you iudges, whether that which I now say, I speake of feare, whether I haue occasion to vse flattering wordes for dread of a more seuere chastisement, then that which I haue alreadye felt, whether it be the doubt of mine owne ruine that makes mee complaine: or to the contrarie whether it bee the true sence and feeling of the miseries of my countrie, the loue of peace; and greatnesse of Fraunce, which wresteth from mee this manner of speech. I should play the souldier, if I should tell you in order what armies within these foure yeares haue pursued mee, that woulde cause you to thinke that I went about to recount vnto you my valoure; No, that is not my intent, *I* would to God I had neuer bene a captaine, seeing that my first training vp in armes must bee learned with so greate losse. I should do far better to demaund of you what Chiefetaines are left in Fraunce, beside those which haue beue sent against me. I haue seene in foure yeares ten armies, ten Lieutenants of the King, hauing attending them at their heeles the forces & strength of the goodliest kingdome of all Christendome. You take this for no glorie: it is so far from mee to goe about to withdrawe you from this opinion, that my selfe do tell you that of these ten armies, I haue had to doe in effecte but with one, which I haue beaten and discomfited. And in this

this God did particularly vse my meanes for their ruine; but in all the other I haue not beene put to any labour at all: they haue beene vtterly consumed before they haue seene me: & I haue alsoone had intelligence of their dispersing, as of their leuying. The Angell the scourge of God hath taken from them the power and meanes to annoy me. It is not to mee to whome the glorye heereof appertaineth: I haue shewed you almost nothing of mine owne: but in effect, you may vnderstand of your deputies, which are in those prouinces, where they of the religion haue had some places of retreate, what successe their exploites haue had. Consider the estate wherein they stood before the warre, and that wherein they are at this houre: and iudge aduisedly, to what end hath serued this foure yeares space the losse of the liues of a million, of men, the expences of a mine of golde, the ruine of the people of Fraunce: insomuch as they had made a better market and more easie to bee compassed, if they had attempted the discomfiture of the *Ottomanes*, or to ioine all the realmes of Christendome to our crowne?

It is impossible but that these things should moue you, and that you should note heereby that this is an extraordinarie worke and effect. Moreouer I say this vnto you, that as this ought wholy to cause you to lift your eyes and hands to heauen, acknowledging that if you fight against God, you fight in vaine: in like sorte ought I to powre foorth my praiers before him, that hee will keepe mee from being puft vp with these prosperities, and to attribute the glory heereof to him alone: being most assured, that if I do otherwise, he will turne his louing countenance from me, and will in two moneths giue more aduantage to my enemies against me, then I haue in foure yeare found fauour at his hands.

I hope by his grace not to behaue my selfe otherwise then dutifully. And therefore my meaning is that this discourse shall proclaime throughout all the world in my name: That to day I am as ready to request of the King my Lord, peace, the quiet of his realme, and mine owne rest, as euer I was

heeretofore, I had at the beginning of theſe warres, regard of my conſcience and honour, which I alwaies haue, & yet doe beſeech his Maieſtie to leaue to me intier. The wars haue diminiſhed nothing therefrom, neither haue they added anye thing, that may make me vnwilling to giue eare to a motion of peace. I do therefore moſt humbly beſeech it: and as touching you my lords & maiſters, I thinke if you had loued the king, if you had loued his eſtate, if you had diſcerned theſe euils and their remedies, you ſhould haue cõmaunded your deputies which were at this aſſemblie to haue begun & finiſhed their concluſions for the obtaining thereof. I intreate & admoniſh you to further it as much as you may.

I know very well that in their pamphlets they haue cauſed this generall maxime to be inſerted, That there ought to be but one religion in one realme, and that the foundation of an eſtate is pietie, which cannot be in that place, where God is diuerſly and by conſequence badly ſerued. I affirme it is ſo: I ſee many people complaine thereof, fewe that will ſeeke to redreſſe it. But I haue alwaies ſubmitted my ſelfe to reaſon, & yet do offer, that if they will trye the vſuall and accuſtomed waye in theſe caſes, and if there be any extraordinarie waies that they will labour to ſearche them out: both I and all they of the religiõ will alwaies conforme our ſelues to that which a free generall counſell ſhall determine; this is the true way, this is the only way, which hath in all ages beene put in practiſe, by this way we will ſuffer, and with patience endure to be condemned. But to beleeue that by dinte of ſworde this may be obteined of vs: I thinke (before God) that it is a thing altogither impoſsible, and in trueth the ſucceſſe and euent dooth ſhew no leſſe.

It were but ſuperfluous to diſcourſe at large of this matter, being already ſufficientlye argued and diſputed. They haue often ſummoned me to change my religion: but after what manner? with the dagger at my throte. If I had had no reſpect vnto my conſcience, yet the regarde of mine honour would haue withheld mee from conſenting in that ſort. Was

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there euer any of that opinion, that a man might kil a Turke, a naturall Pagan, kill him (I say) for his religion, before he hath assaied to conuert him? Yet I suppose that my greatest enemies, do not thinke mee to be more estraunged from the feare and knowledge of GOD, then a Turke, and notwithstanding they are more cruell against mee, then against this infidell.

What would the most affectionat vnto the Catholike religion report of me, if hauing liued this thirtie yeres after one sort, they should suddenly see me change my religiō, in hope of a kingdome? What would they report of mee, that haue seene and tried my courage, if shamefully I should abandon for feare, the manner wherein I haue serued God from the very daie of my natiuitie? These be reasons which touch the honour of this world. But to come to the maine point; What conscience hauing beene nourished, instructed, and trayned vp in a profession of faithe, woulde vnaduisedly without any speech or reasoning thereof, in a moment betake himselfe to the contrarie side? No (my lords and maisters) that shall neuer be the king of *Nauarr*, were there thirtie kingdomes to be gained thereby: so farre is it from him to goe against his conscience for the hope of one alone. Teach me better, I am not selfewild; take some course to instruct me, you shall profit thereby at length; for if you shewe mee anye other trueth, then that which I now beleeue, I will submit my selfe, and doo more then that; for I am sure there is not any one of my partie, which will not likewise yeeld himselfe together with me. You shall make a goodly gaine to GOD, and notable conquest of consciences, in vanquishing me alone But to feede vs with wordes without reason, and to goo about to induce vs to bee perswaded by the onelye countenaunce of some; iudge (my Lordes and Maisters) if this bee reasonable.

But to let this passe; if you simplye desire my welfare, I thanke you; if you doo not longe for my conuersion, for feare least one daye I shoulde by violence constraine you

to alter your religion: you do me wrong to iudge ſo, ſeeing I haue alwaies miſliked ſuch kinde of proceedings: the maner of my liuing and behauiour, both with my freends and with mine enemies, at home and in the field, may giue ſufficient proofe of my diſpoſition; the townes where I now am, and which of late I wonne, can beare me record thereof. Neither is it likely that a handfull of people of my religion, can enforce an infinite number of catholikes to that paſſe, whereto this infinite number hath not beene able to reduce this handfull. And if I haue with ſo ſmall forces fought and ſuſteined this quarrell ſo long time; what may they then do who with ſuch and ſo great meanes may oppoſe themſelues moſt forciblie againſt my conſtraint, conſiſting of ſo ſmall ability? It were no wiſedom for me to take that courſe. That matter is not at this time in queſtion: I am not as yet in degree, (God be thanked) to doo you either good or euill, neyther ſhall I euer (if hee pleaſe) bee brought to that tryall, nor you to that hazard. Wee haue all one King, who no doubt will leaue good order for the ſucceſſion, whenſoeuer the extremitie of age ſhall end his dayes. In the meane ſeaſon let vs not trouble our ſelues ſo much with a thing ſo long to come, that wee forget the preſent eſtate wherein conſiſteth our ſpeciall welfare.

God hath cauſed this day the depth of their deſignements and endeuours, which troubled this eſtate, to be diſcouered: hee hath alſo laide open my intents. None of you, none of Fraunce is ignorant heereof. Is it not a miſerable thing that there is not one from the leaſt to the greateſt in this realme, who ſeeth not this miſcheefe, who exclaimeth not againſt theſe broiles, who termeth them not the continuall and mortall feuer of this eſtate; and yet none openeth his mouth to find remedy therefore? That in all this aſſemblie of *Bloyes*, none dare pronounce this ſacred word, Peace, that worde, in whoſe effect conſiſteth the good of this realme? Beleeue me (my Lords and maiſters) this wonderfull ſecuritie, and fatall amazednesse, is one of the greateſt preſages and forewar-

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nings that God hath ſent a declining eſtate vnto this realme.

Our eſtate is extreame ſicke, euery one ſeeth it: by all ſignes and apparences it is iudged, that the cauſe of this euill is the ciuill warre; a malady almoſt incurable, of which no eſtate did euer yet recouer: or if it hath beene releeued, if this appoplexie hath not ſpred ouer all, it hath at leaſt beene conuerted into a palſie, to the vtter ſpoile of halfe of the bodye. What remedy then? no other then peace: which affoordeth comfort to the heart of this realme: which by orderly dyet expelleth the rebellious and noyſome humors, purgeth corruptions, and repleniſheth the bodye with pure blood, good humoures, and ſound mindes, which in ſumme, cauſeth it to flouriſh and liue. This is the operation which peace worketh, which ought to be craued at Gods hands for the onely remedy, for the onely meanes of health: who ſo ſeeketh other waies in ſteed of curing will poiſon this realme.

I then coniure you all by this writing, aſwell Catholikes ſeruitors of the King my Lorde, as thoſe which are not ſo: I appeale vnto you as *Frenchmen*, I ſummon you to take pittie of this eſtate: to take pittie of your ſelues, whoſe ſteps are vndermined in ſuch ſorte, that if you doo not looke to your ſelues betimes, ruine and deſtruction will ouertake you: to take pittie of me, whom you conſtraine perforce to beholde, to ſuffer, and to doo thoſe thinges, which were it not in the middeſt of theſe armes, I had rather dye a thouſand deaths, then to behold, ſuffer or doo. I coniure you to diſperſe and abandon all at once, the miſerable humors and effects of violence and warres, which doe rente and diſmember this renouned eſtate, which doe withdrawe vs, ſome by force, others ouerwillingly from the obedience of our king: which cauſes vs to imbrue our ſelues with the blood one of another: & which haue already ſo often made vs the laughing-ſtocke of ſtrangers, and in the end will make vs to bee theyr conqueſt, I coniure you (I ſaye) to acquite vs of all theſe bitter greeuances, to reſtore to vs the pleaſant calme of peace and vnitie, to intertaine againe obedient and orderly mindes,

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and to poſſeſſe your ſelues with the ſpirit of concord: where-by the ſmalleſt eſtates haue become mightie Empyres, and ours hath along time flouriſhed the moſt renowned king-dome of all Chriſtendome.

Although I haue a thouſand and a thouſand occaſions, paritcularlye to complaine of thoſe of the houſe of *Guiſe*, of them (ſay I) for my kindred, and kindred ſo neere, that beſide thoſe of my name, I haue none neerer. And although that in generall, Fraunce hath more occaſion then I: yet God know-eth what a greefe it was to me, to ſee them take that courſe which my heart alwaies gaue mee, would neuer ſorte vnto their honour. God is my witneſſe I tooke them to bee com-modious and profitable for the Kings ſeruice: and (I maye ſaye) auaileable alſo for my ſelfe, ſeeing they had the honor to be of my kindred, & that my degree was aboue & before theirs. I was alwaies, and ſhould haue beene verye glad to haue ſeene them imploye thoſe meanes that God and nature had affourded them, for the good and faithfull ſeruice of them, whome they ought dutifully to haue ſerued: in ſteede whereof, when their wicked counſels did enforſe them to a contrary kinde of dealing, there were in the worlde (though not my ſelfe) that did laugh at their miſfortune, & would haue bin ful well apaid to haue ſeene the diſpleaſure, declarations, & armes of the king my Lord conuerted againſt them.

Let vs not waxe proud, neither the one ſide nor the other: as for my part although I haue receiued more fauour of God in this warre, then in all the former: and that whereas the o-ther two factions (what hard happe is it that I am forced to terme them ſo?) haue weakened themſelues: mine in ap-parance is ſtrengthened: yet I know very well that preſently, and as often as I ſhall ſet aſide my dutie: God will leaue to bleſſe me anye longer: and I ſhould wholye neglect it, if without reaſon, and of a iolitie of heart, I ſhould oppoſe my ſelfe againſt my king, and trouble the quiet of his countrie.

As touching them, who during theſe foure laſt yeares haue loued armes better then peace; who haue firſt renued the

warre

warre in this eſtate, & haue erected the third faction, vnworthie the fidelitie of Fraunce, and (to go a little further) vnworthie the loialtie of their Grandfathers. Seeing God hath ſhewed them by his iudgements, that their dealings are not agreeable to his will: ſeeing naytheleſſe that hee hath touched the heart of our king, to receaue them to his accuſtomed mildneſſe and clemencie (as himſelfe hath declared) let them yet at the laſt hould themſelues contented & quiet. We haue all of vs offered and indured harmes inough, we hane bin this foure yeare togither continuallye beſotted, outragious, & almoſt ſtarkemad. Is not this enough, trow ye u? hath not God ſufficiently beaten and corrected vs, both the one part & the other, to cauſe vs to awake from our careleſſe ſecuritie, to make vs wiſe in the end, and to ſuppreſſe our furies?

But if after this it be lawfull that as a moſt humble & loiall ſubiect of the King my Lorde, I may giue ſome good aduiſe to thoſe which maye counſell him: who hath euer heard it ſpoken, that that ſtate can endure, where there are two factions within't, alwaies vp in armes, and readye the one to aſſaile the other? what ſhall than become of ours, where there are three? how may a man perſwade the King to raiſe ciuill warre, and that againſt two parties all at one inſtant? There is no preſident, no hiſtorie, no reaſon that can aſſure him a good iſſue and euent heereof. It behoooueth him therefore to make a peace, and that a generall peace withall his ſubiects, aſwell of the one ſide as of the other, aſwell of the one as of the other religiō: or at leaſt that he reconcile, & reunite thoſe vnto him which are leaſt eſtranged from his obedience. And to that purpoſe let euery man iudge of mine intent: behold how I intreate for a cōmon good: how I do not labour to animate the King againſt his ſubiects, which haue beene of this goodly league: and yet you may knowe (my Lords) that if I would vndertake to do it, & in his neceſſitie to afford him my ſeruice (as I wil do, if he commaund me thereto) in outward apparance I am like to croſſe many of their deſignements, & eaſily to curbe and keepe them ſhort in their enterpriſes.

I appeale at this time to all the reſt of our eſtates, who haue remained beholders of our follies, I appeale to our nobilitie, to our cleargie, to our townes, to our people, theſe be they to whom I ſpeake, that they will conſider what will become of Fraunce, if we runne on headlong as we haue begun: what countenance this eſtate will cary, if this miſchiefe continue: what the nobilitie ſhall doo, if our gouernment be altered, as it will bee vndoubtedlye (being alreadye in a faire waye towardes it) if the townes for feare of partakers againſt them, ſhall be conſtrained to ſettle and fortifie themſelues within their gates, not to ſuffer any man to commaund ouer them, and to cantoune themſelues after the manner of the Zwitzers, I aſſure my ſelfe, there is none of that minde as yet: but the warre in proceſſe of time may force them to it. And to my great greefe, I ſee alredy ſuch beginnings ſpringing amongſt them, which outwardly make ſemblance of ſo ſweete and pleaſant ſhewe, that the beſt and moſt loyall burgeſſes of the world will eaſily ſuffer themſelues to be caryed away therewithall.

What ſhall become of the townes, when vnder a vaine likelyhood of libertie they haue turned topſie turuie the order of this worthie eſtate; when they ſhall haue the nobilitie their enemies; the countrye rounde about repyning at them, and deſirous againe and againe, to ſacke and ſpoyle them, imagining that within their cofers and ſhoppes, they haue treaſure and richeſſe without content or number.

What ſhall the principall inhabitants doo, which holde the offices of the Monarchie, of the Exchequer, of iuſtice, of ciuill policie, or of armes; Let euery one recount in the middeſt of their domeſticall fortune, that the aſſurance of theyr eſtate is cleane gone, if the monarchie be ouerthrowne. Who ſhall allowe them the free exerciſe and trade of Merchandize? Who ſhall warrant them their poſſeſſions in the field? who ſhall ſupport the authoritie of their iuſtice? what decrees ſhall they eſtabliſh? who ſhall commaund ouer theyr armies? to be breefe, what ſhall be their order? euen miſe-

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rable abuſes. This furie may indure for a moneth or two in the ſame ſort, as it is ſaid that the feuer nouriſheth the ſicke bodye: but to thinke that vpon the foundations of wrathe & vengeance, an aſſured intelligence, and durable forme of gouernment may be eſtabliſhed: that can neuer be. It hath neuer beene either ſeene or read, that an eſtate hath bin changed, without the ruine of hir townes, which are alwaies the principall props and pillers thereof.

And thou people, when the nobilitie and townes ſhall be deuided, what reſt ſhalt thou enioye? people, the garner and ſtorehouſe of a realme: the fertile fields of this eſtate, whoſe trauaile nouriſheth Princes, whoſe ſweate dooth water them, whoſe occupations doo maintaine them, whoſe induſtrie doth affourde them delicacies for reare bankets: to whom ſhalt thou haue recourſe, when the nobilitie ſhall oppreſſe thee: when the townes ſhall exact and leuie contributions of thee? For the King? he ſhall not be able to commaund ouer the one or the other ſide: for the officers of his Iuſtice? where ſhall they bee found? for his Lieutenants? What power ſhall they retaine? for the Mayor of a towne? what authoritie ſhall hee haue ouer the nobilitie? for the chiefe of the nobilitie? what otder will there bee amongſt them? lamentable confuſion, diſorder, and miſery ouer all. And thus behold the effects of warre.

It proceeds not of forgetfulneſſe, that *I* ſpeake nothing of the clergie. Neither would I ſpeake of them at all, miſdoubting that they will not take it in good parte, becauſe they eſteeme me their enemie more then I am; but that in truthe I haue more cauſe to find my ſelfe agreeued with their order, then with both the other orders of *Fraunce*. I way it not: there be ſome good men amongſt them. As touching their profeſſion and religion, in ſome things I am contrary to them: in nothing their enemie: in other things we are of one minde, ſaue where they concerne the conſeruation of the priuiledges of the Church of *Fraunce* againſt the Pope. Howſoeuer it be, though *I* were ſo highlye in their bookes that they

would affourd mee all the commendations in the worlde: yet woulde I tread their praiſes vnder my feete at this preſent, being carryed by a more vehement conſideration, to wit, of the ſeruice I owe to my King, and dutie to this eſtate. In the meane ſeaſon, what hope haue they? the warre dooth deuoure and conſume their tenthes in thoſe countries where they haue the greateſt credit: as for thoſe places where my authoritie ſtretches, I poſſeſſe in a manner all they ought to haue, neither may I remedie it: but when this diſſention in proceſſe of time ſhall be ſpred ouer all, what ſhall they then be able to doo?

Let them regard what courſe our townes, our people, our nobilitie doo take. Let them conſider (who haue or ought to haue godlineſſe in great account) if there be any thing ſo contrary thereto, as vice and diſorder: if there be anye thing that brings men ſo farre out of ſquare, as the licentious libertie of ciuill warre. Let them iudge at laſt, if they, which haue not beene inriched nor increaſed but by peace, by order, by obedience to our Kinges, and by deuotion, ſhall not hereafter goe to decay by warre, by confuſion, by impietie, and by mutinous diſobedience.

Hauing ſpoken to all men in particular, I will yet ſaye this in generall. Bee it that God bleſſe the purpoſes of our King, and that he reduce all the mutinies of his realme to an end: it were a lamentable caſe that he ſhould cauſe all thoſe to be puniſhed, which doo deſerue it. What? ſhall hee take reuenge of a great part of his townes, of a great parte of his ſubiects? that were to much, that were a miſchiefe, that were a madneſſe, ſent by God into this realme for the punifhment of our tranſgreſſions. Hee muſt beare no more diſpleaſure to our people, & to our townes, then to a frantike fellow when hee fighteth, or to a mad man when he runneth about ſtarke naked.

Bee it to the contrary that thoſe of the league ſhall ſtrengthen themſelues in ſuch ſort, that they ſhall be able to reſiſt him (as ſurely there is ſome likelihood, and I feare mee that his

his pacience is their principall force: if God will he may exercise his iudgements vpon vs, and wee knowe not whether wee or they shall feele it first,) What will be sayd of Frenchmen?

What shame will it bee to vs, that wee haue chased away our Kings? a staine that neuer spotted the garments of our fathers, and the onely aduantage that we haue of all the subiects of Christendome.

In the meane season is not this a great inconuenience for me that I am constrained to remaine idle? They haue thrust armes into my handes perforce; against whome shall I imploye them at this time? against my King? God hath touched his hart, he hath taken vpon him the quarrell in my behalfe against those of the league. Wherefore should I, which publish and perswade peace in Fraunce, aggreuate the King against them: and by bringing my forces into the field, seeme to endeuour to take away from him his gentle forbearance, and from them all hope of reconciliation. Beholde the straight whereinto I am driuen: for if I continue quiet, eyther they shall make an agreement to my cost (as I haue seene it already twise or thrise to happen) or else they shall so weaken the King, and make themselues so strong; that after his ruiue, I shall haue no more force or abilitie to impeache mine owne ouerthrow.

My Lordes, and maisters, I speake also to you, whome I know to my vnspeakeable sorrow, not to be composed all of one humor. The declarations of the King my Lord, and especially his last, do sufficiently manifest, that there are some of your deputies, and almost the greatest part at the deuotion of other, then of the king.

If you haue neuer so small iudgement, you cannot but beleeue with mee, that I am in great hazarde, that the kinge is so, that the thirde partie is so, that your selues in general and each one in particular are so. We are all within one house which is now a falling; wee are all within one

ſhip which is readie to ſinke; and there is no remedie, that can be imagined but onely peace, let them ſearche for other as long as they liſt.

In concluſion then, hauing better (as I may ſay) and more intereſt in this then all you, I demaund peace of the king my Lord in the name of all: *I* demaund it for my ſelfe, for thoſe of the league, for all Frenchmen, for Fraunce it ſelfe. Who ſo demaunds it otherwiſe dooth not well. I proteſt to yeeld my ſelfe more tractable then at any time heeretofore. If I haue at any time beene harde to be dealt withall, I will ſerue at this preſent for an example to others by obedience, which I will ſhew to my King. But hauing ſo often and ſundry times proteſted and vttered that which is my dutie, and that which is for our common profit: I will nowe declare, firſt to thoſe which are of the King my Soueraigne his ſide, that if they do not order themſelues with me, if they doo not accord to this ſacred deliberation, not to make warre againſt the league, or thoſe of *Lorraine*, not againſt *Parris*, *Orleance*, or *Tholouſe*: but againſt thoſe which hinder peace, & the obedience due to this Crowne: that then they alone ſhall be guiltie of the miſchiefes which ſhall betide the King and this realme: and that I on the contrary ſhall be blameleſſe, hauing diſcharged my fidelitie to my Prince, whoſe hurt as much as in me lies, I do and will withſtand, yea though himſelfe were careleſſe thereof.

And as touching thoſe which ſtill reteine the name and partie of the league, I coniure them as Frenchmen heerevnto: I would willinglye commaund them, yet as thoſe which haue the honour to be of my kindred; whoſe Fathers (I am aſſured) would haue taken ſuch a commaundement for a very great fauour. But if this be not doone after this ſorte, I my ſelfe (as the cheefe Prince and greateſt Magiſtrate nexte the King in *Fraunce*) will bring to paſſe, that they ſhall haue enough to doo to looke vnto themſelues: and reſt content with their owne priuate loſſe for a publike benefit: that they ſhall tame and bridle their paſſions, their quarrels, their reuenge,

uenge, and their ambicion, for the good of Fraunce their mother, for the ſeruice of their King, and for their owne quiet and ours. Beſide this, if they doe otherwiſe, I hope that God will not altogether abandon the King, that he will not execute his wrath vpon him, nor make him loth to call his ſeruants about him, as my ſelfe the firſt, who doe deſire no other title. And they which ſhall come for this purpoſe, ſhall haue power enough, and aſſured right for to aide and aſſiſt him, to aboliſh the memorye of theſe men out of the world, and out of their natiue countrie of Fraunce.

Finallye hauing doone my dutie in this ſo ſolemne proteſtation, which I haue made, if I perceiue both the one and the other ſo hardened, or ſo badlye affected, that none of them are mooued heereby: I will call God to witneſſe of my actions paſſed, and to my ayde for thoſe to come. And you true ſeruants of my King: you true Frenchmen, worthy of as much honour as I inioye, to bee the cheefe Princes of this realme: though all the world had conſpired hir ruine, I proteſt before God and men, that to the hazard of a thouſand liues, I will aſſay all alone to vphold it.

I call to my aſſiſtance all thoſe which haue this goldy deſire, of what condition or qualitie ſoeuer they bee; hoping, that if God bleſſe my indeuoures, ſo much courage as I ſhew in interpriſing heereof, ſo much fidelitie and conſtancie ſhall I haue in atchieuing the end, rendring to my King my obedience, to my countrie my deuoire, to my ſelfe my reſt and contentment, togither with the liberty of all good men.

And in the meane while till it ſhall pleaſe God to giue leaſure vnto the King my Lord to take order for the affaires of his eſtate, eſtabliſhing peace, which is ſo neceſſary, I doo affirme (as he that hath the honour to hold the cheefeſt place of account vnder his obedience) that if I cannot ſerue him ſo well in his abſence, as to cauſe his authoritie throughout all his realme to be receaued: I wil at leaſt in part bring to paſſe that in thoſe places where my power and abilitie extendeth, they ſhall acknowledge it. And for that intent I receaue into

my protection and ſauegard, all thoſe, of what qualitie, religion, or condition that they bee, aſwell of the nobilitie, of the cleargie, of the townes, as of the people, that will linke and vnite themſelues to me in this good and honourable reſolution: not permitting that their bodies or goods ſhall be touched in any maner of ſorte, otherwiſe then in time of perfect peace, and when the lawes of the realme haue accuſtomed to deale with them.

And although that more then anye other I greeue to ſee difference of religion, & that more then anye other I wiſh it remedied: neuertheleſſe, acknowledging that this muſt come from God alone, (whoſe ſuccour heerin we muſt needs attend) and not to enforce it by armes or by violence: I proteſt before God, and in this proteſtation doe pawne my faith and honour (which by his grace I haue hetherto kept vndefiled) that in the ſame maner as I haue not endured, that they ſhould enforce mine owne conſcience: in like ſorte I will neuer ſuffer nor permit, that the catholikes ſhall by conſtraint be drawne from theirs, nor from the exerciſe of their religion. Declaring further, that in thoſe townes which togither with me ſhall perſiſt in this minde, and ſhall ſubiect themſelues vnder the obedience of the King my Lord, and my authoritie, I will not indure that anye thing ſhall be innouated, eyther in the politike eſtate, or in the church, except in as much as it ſhal concerne euery mans liberty. Taking againe aſwel the perſons as the goods of the Catholikes, and eſpecially of the eccleſiaſticall ſort vnder my protection and ſauegard. Hauing learned long agoe, that the true and onelye meanes to reynite the people, to reduce them to the ſeruice of God, and to eſtabliſh pietie in anye eſtate, are mildneſſe, peace, and good examples: not warre, nor diſcord, by the which vices, and all maner of miſchiefes doo grow vp in the world. Giuen at *Chatteleraud*, the 4. of *Marche*, 1589.

FINIS.